

# Angel Programs 2023



Angel Visitation Center  
Angel Assistance  
Angel Baby Bags  
1st Five/Baby Cat  
Child Advocacy Expo  
Christmas Giving  
Mouse Nibbles  
Opportunity Outreach  
Tools For Success

*Better Together*

[www.angelsagainstabuse.org](http://www.angelsagainstabuse.org)

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## **ANGELS AGAINST ABUSE, INC**

### **Recap of Programs**

### **2023 UPDATE**

**(Updated July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023)**

*There is light in this world, a healing spirit more powerful than any darkness we may encounter. We sometimes lose sight of this force when there is suffering, too much pain, then suddenly, the spirit will emerge through the lives of ordinary people who hear a call and answer in extraordinary ways.*

*- Mother Teresa*

## **How the Angels Are Making a Difference? Recap of Programs We Provide Annually & As Needed**

### **Angel Mission Statement**

*The mission of Angels Against Abuse is to build awareness and educate the community regarding existing neglect and abuse against children. We provide support, monetarily and through hands-on volunteer hours, to neglected and abused children who are removed from an abusive situation, and to those children and families who are at risk of losing their children because of such situations. We strive to bring together all available resources to help families achieve the best possible result from available government agencies, courts, and services in the fastest possible manner when help is needed most. In some cases, it is as easy as pointing people in the right direction and making sure that they get there. We are making a real difference in the lives of many children who are unfortunate victims of abuse and systems that fail to help them.*

*The Angels take pride in the fact that we could research what the needs are within the Welfare System and work towards meeting those needs. Our ability to be the “quick responders” when it comes to a child’s needs has proven to be a huge benefit to the many agencies that we work with daily. The Angels can only touch the surface of the many needs that these children and youth need in our community, but we are making a difference and giving “HOPE” for a better tomorrow to children, youth and families who suffer at the hands of their abusers.*

### **Our Journey**

Founded in 2007, Angels Against Abuse started with four women whose hearts were captivated when they visited an emergency shelter for children ranging in ages newborn to eleven called the Sallie House. Immediately after their visit, they vowed to start a movement that would positively impact the lives and futures of the children who had unfortunately suffered from child abuse and/or neglect in our local community.

We started Sallie’s Angels and hosted our **1<sup>st</sup> Annual Blue-Ribbon Gala** fundraiser to help kick-start the capital campaign for construction of a much needed, new Sallie House. Once the new Sallie House was completed and running smoothly, it became clear that our work was far from over as we realized there were thousands of children in our local community needing our help. We formed a non-profit organization, changing our name to Angels Against Abuse Inc., so that instead of solely focusing on the Sallie House, we would additionally begin to help throughout our local community to those children and families that have unfortunately been placed into the child welfare system.

Since then, Angels Against Abuse has been blessed with the opportunity to have influence in the lives of so many children and families who have been abused and neglected. The Angels continue to find ways to increase our assistance, develop innovative programs, and strive to make a difference in the lives of many. We take pride in our ability to establish strong relationships with our community partners to develop programs that will have the biggest impact on the children we advocate for. As the system changes, the programs change, and the Angels quickly adjust our programs or develop new ones to meet the need.

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## **Angel Assistance Program**

**Angel Assistance Program** – All of our programs that we have developed with our Community Partners have requests that occur throughout the year that are either under-funded or not funded at all, that are important to a child's well-being. These requests range from an immediate need to a need that will benefit the child's life. When the request is received, if it is more than \$500, it is sent to our Board for review. The review process is completed within 24 hours. If we are unable to assist, we try to find a solution to help get the request filled. The Angels collaborate closely with our Community Partners to assure that we are addressing these needs and making a difference in the lives of these children.

## **Boley Centers (a newcomer to the Angels)**

The Angels recently started working with the families from the Boley Centers since many of the children and families were part of the child welfare system until they aged out. Now their children need some of the resources the Angels provide to our community partners. The Boley Centers were established in 1970. They are a private non-profit organization serving individuals with mental disabilities, families who are homeless and Veterans and youth in Pinellas County as well as other neighboring counties. Their mission is to enrich the lives of people in recovery providing them with the highest level of treatment, rehabilitation, employment, and housing. If we can provide resources to help these children in need of resources, we can provide through our Angel Assistance Program and Tools for Success Program, we can help these families survive.

## **CHILD ADVOCACY EXPO**

The Angels host this event annually to provide a networking and team building opportunity to all the participants and agencies who attend. We are in our 13<sup>th</sup> year of collaborating with these agencies and providing an opportunity to all the participants to learn about the many resources available in our community. This event has been an enormous success over the years in getting agencies to work together as a TEAM and making more of an impact on children's lives. We invite not only the community leaders and agencies, but we also invite donors, businesses, organizations, and foundations. They have an opportunity to meet face to face with the charities and agencies they support. It has been a tremendous success and every year it grows with newcomers in our area. The Angels want these events to be informative and fun, so we have a keynote speaker that brings knowledge and updates to what is happening in our community and the impact it is having on the children we support. This year our keynote speaker will once again be Shevaun Harris, Secretary of the Department of Children and Families. She has served as Secretary since February 2021. Last year she talked about her innovative vision and commitment to improve Florida's approach in supporting vulnerable children and families. This year, she will be giving our group an update on what is happening in our area.

## **Christmas Giving Program – Believe in the Magic of Christmas**

**The Angels give Hope at Christmas** - Every Christmas the Angels create magic at their Christmas Giving Event! This day is special to us because it is a day where our community partners gather to celebrate our Christmas Giving Program and distribute hundreds of gifts to children who would not have Christmas if not for the Angels. Last year we made over 368 children's wish lists come true and every child had their own Christmas bag filled with what they had wished for on Christmas morning. We want every child to realize and **BELIEVE** there is good in the world and good people all around us. Here is the current list of

Agencies we worked with this past year which comprised approximately four hundred children and youth! Please read the Believe in the Magic of Christmas Recap included in this brochure for this year's Christmas Giving Celebration.

- **Healthy Start PAT+** - *New moms and dads who are struggling to be good moms and in need of encouragement and assistance for their babies who are unable to provide for themselves much less have presents for their child on Christmas Day, we give HOPE.*
- **Friends of the Children Mentoring Program** - *The children who are at most risk who have been assigned a mentor on their life journey from elementary school age to high school who need something to look forward to on Christmas Morning that will make them feel special, the Angels made it happen!*
- **Directions for Living** – *Children from all walks of life who need something to smile about and in need of Angels in their lives. Families living in a motel that are homeless and struggling from day to day to get back on their feet, these are the people Angels gave Christmas to.*
- **Boley Center** – *These are families who face many challenges every day, but still want to provide for their children who are at risk due to the challenges of their parents. This year at Christmas we provided eight families with Christmas that would not have received a Christmas if not for the Angels.*
- **Santa's Corner** – *Every year we provide Christmas gifts for last minute removals that occur around Christmas. We do not want any child to feel left out on Christmas morning, so our amazing Christmas Corner assists all the agencies we work with to assure every child has something to open on Christmas.*

### **Directions for Living**

- **Angel Assistance** – For the past, several years we have partnered with Directions for Living to fulfill the many needs that they deal with daily. These children and families have faced so many obstacles and challenges. Being able to assist with their needs has been extremely instrumental in how they move forward.
- **Campbell Park Elementary School Pre-K First Five Program/BabyCAT started in 2020 and Kings Highway Elementary School in 2021.** The Angels partnered with Directions for Living to launch a new program specifically designed to provide an Intensive In-home Service for children under five, which is also referred to as the "First Five Program." Their success is attributed to the piece of the puzzle that the Angels provide, which Directions refers to as "The Secret Sauce," our Clinical Consultant. The Clinical Consultant works intensely with the children and their behavioral issues, the teachers, and the parents to assure the success of this program. There is a sense of normalcy and consistency in their lives during their most critical years of development. The Angels are extremely excited to partner with Directions on this program since it accomplishes our mission of breaking the pattern of abuse! Our focus is to do anything possible to eliminate abuse and allow children to grow into healthy and happy adults. As of this writing the success of this program is at 98% and this model has received a lot of attention from funders and the State of Florida.
- The ripple effect of the success of this model not only impacts the child, their siblings, and the family, but it impacts our community as well when you convert the cost of a child who enters the child welfare system and becomes another statistic in the foster care system.

- These programs are highly successful in helping prevent pre-k children from going into the child welfare system. Thanks to the teams assigned to these children and families we are breaking the pattern of abuse! What started as a pilot program has become such a success that it is now going to be a statewide model for Pre-K Elementary Schools. Our partnership with DFL is changing the lives of children at an early age. We are part of the solution for breaking the pattern of abuse for generations to come.
- We feel that providing resources to these families helps to keep the families together. They are willing to do the work for their children to keep them out of the child welfare systems. When we address their needs to make their lives easier, they are more willing to do the work required to keep their families healthy.

### **Tools For Success Program**

- The Angels are providing many items to the agencies we work with that we started a new program called “Tools for Success.” This program provides items like backpacks, school supplies, tablets, computers, uniforms, clothes for job interviews, educational software, college books, and any other items that are related to educational needs. The Angels strongly feel that for children to thrive they need the right tools to make that happen. We want these children to succeed, especially those that have so many obstacles and challenges that they face daily. All of the agencies we work with utilize this program especially when school and college begin. We have seen children go from failing to the honor roll thanks to this program. This program impacts the physical and emotional needs of these children and opens doors for them to succeed.

### **Friends Of The Children Mentoring Program**

- **School Uniforms** – This program consists of both girls and boys ranging in age from kindergarten through high school. The Angels provide two uniforms per child every school year. This year we are providing uniforms and school backpacks and supplies to fifty children in our community.
- **Tablets and Computers** – The mentors who work with these children do not have adequate funding for these items due to the expense involved, so the Angels assist with these expenses through our Tools for Success Program.
- **Backpacks/School Supplies** – Each school year the Angels provide backpacks and school supplies for these children in preparation for their school year. The Angels bridge the gap for this need since there is no funding for this type of assistance.
- **Christmas Giving** – The Angels and some very generous donors provide Christmas for fifty-five children in the program. Their wish list is filled and there is a large Christmas Bag for every child. Our hope is to give them a reason to believe in the magic of Christmas and have Hope for a better tomorrow.
- **Educational Software (New)** – Most of these children are now in middle school and the Mentors need educational software to assist the children with their homework. The software and the tablets have been instrumental in their ability to make good grades.
- **Therapy** – If a child needs therapy quickly, we assist with these sessions since time is a priority when a child needs help.

- **Angel Assistance** – There are many occasions where FOTC would make a request outside of the ones mentioned above. Our Angel Assistance Program fills these needs by collaborating with the community leaders to fill these needs that will be effective in a child's life.

## **HERO TO A CHILD**

The Angels constantly evaluate our programs to make sure they are making the biggest impact in a child's life. When we met with the CEO of Hero to a Child and learned that there were needs for these children that would significantly impact their lives, we were interested in working with this organization to put our efforts in a new program called **OPPORTUNITY OUTREACH**. This program is a tremendous success for these children who physically and emotionally need activities to make them feel like other children in our community. When we approved this program, we had no idea the impact it would have on the mental illness crisis that our children and youth are facing. We were amazed at how quickly these children's lives changed. It improved their grades, their socialization and people significantly. The ability to get involved in an activity is a positive experience and impacts them in more ways than you can imagine. We are replacing sadness with joy and giving children something to smile about. The feedback we have received from Hero to a Child is so exciting for the Angels. We are making a difference in children's lives every day.

- **Opportunity Outreach Program** – This program is a direct benefit to the children allowing them to have real, "normal" kid experiences. These funds help to make sure that they can participate in the school, church, and/or community activities that they are interested in without putting the burden of funding on the child or foster parent. Some examples of funding requests include:
  - *Registration fees for school sports and the equipment needed to participate.*
  - *Going on a school field trip or church/YMCA outing*
  - *Going to homecoming or prom and purchasing a dress or suit*
  - *Getting a bike*
  - *Being able to purchase school pictures.*
  - *Taking dance, karate, or music lessons after school*
  - *Covering the cost of a cake for a birthday party*
  - *Attending summer camp*
  - *Taking swim lessons*

## **The Kind Mouse**

**Mouse Nibbles Program** – We partner with The Kind Mouse to assist with the growing population of hungry children in our community. There are over seven thousand children in Pinellas County going hungry every day at the elementary school level and the Angels feel no child should go to bed hungry. We want to be a part of this solution.

## **Operation Angel Baby Mouse Nibbles Program**

**The Angels & The Kind Mouse partnership** – Monthly the Angels prepare baby bags filled with items specifically for infants that are distributed to any agency needing urgent items for infants. There has been an increase in infant removal since COVID and unfortunately it is still a crisis. The Angels partnered with

The Kind Mouse 2 years ago to make sure these infants were not going without! Every baby bag includes everything you can think of that an infant would need that will help the caregivers with the transition of having an infant to care for. These bags include formula or baby food depending on the age of the infant, diapers, wipes, baby wash, diaper rash ointment, clothing based on age and gender of infant, washcloths, bibs, baby book, pacifier, baby blanket, stuffed animal, rattles and baby bottles by gender and age. Currently we are providing approximately twenty infant bags monthly to these families with infants.

**Wish List Requests** – Throughout the year, the Child Protection Division of the Sheriff's Office has requested items from the Angels based on removals since this is the first place these children go after removal. These requests are needed immediately to make them feel as comfortable as possible with the trauma they are facing. The Angels will make sure these requests are handled as quickly as possible. Thanks to The Kind Mouse, the food pantry makes sure their snacks are taken care of since many of these children are hungry. Some of these urgent requests could be school uniforms, school supplies, clothing, beds, bedding, car seats, pack n plays, hygiene items, etc. and gift cards to purchase items they need immediately. We anticipate that with the recent changes taking place in the child welfare system these requests will now come from the Florida Department of Children and Families.

### **The Angel Visitation Center**

**2023 Update** - The Angel Center is presently operating at full capacity based on our current staff. The Angels had a vision to provide a neutral place for children and biological parents to visit in hopes of reunification. Everyone who walks through our doors, especially the children, fall in love with our Center. Whether it is a case manager, supervisor, caregiver, parent or child, everyone who walks through our doors instantly feels welcome. Everyone is greeted by our Supervisor and Visitation Specialists who are there to assist you with supervised visits. Parents feel no pressure or judgment, just a beautiful, safe and clean environment to visit with their children. This was always our vision to have a place for children to go to interact with their parents and hopefully be reunified. This dream became a reality eight years ago.

**History of the Angel Center** - It is only thanks to the generous hearts of Nick and Kay Catizone, a couple who loved children but had none of their own, that gave the Angels the gift that keeps giving. Thanks to their generous hearts, they have created a legacy that is making a difference in the lives of children in our community every day. Thanks to the generosity of Clearwater Marine Aquarium, the theme of our center is based on the two successful movies, Dolphin Tale 1 and 2. The murals that cover the walls bring life to the center and create an atmosphere for children that is soothing and comforting. We wanted to create a place for children of all ages to be with their biological parents and be in a room that was age appropriate to them.

There are three amazing rooms and a Learning Center for larger sibling groups, board meetings, private meetings and training and orientation. The four rooms that are utilized at our Center range in ages as follows:

- ***Hope Room – infants to toddler ages***
- ***Winter Room – 4 to 9 ages***
- ***Rufus Room – 10 and up and large sibling groups***
- ***Mavis Room –The Learning Center***

The Angels have paid a great deal of attention to every detail in these rooms to insure successful visits between the child and their biological parents. The goal for these supervised visits is a successful reunification of a child with their biological parents and hopefully breaking the pattern of abuse. In those instances where reunification does not occur, the Angel Center has been a healthy environment for that determination to occur. The Case Managers can evaluate the parent's behavior and make the determination of what is in the best interest of that child. Our center is always impeccably clean and we have cameras in all the locations where visits occur to assure safety for all our visitors.

The Center is conveniently located across the street from Family Support Services Suncoast, and the Florida Department of Children and Families for convenience for the various parties who represent the children and on a main bus route for the parents to get to and from their visitations. The physical address is 2200 Tall Pines Drive, Suite 100, Largo, FL. We encourage tours of our facility by all our community partners and donors to get a better understanding of what this Center is all about.

The Angel Center is a powerful tool in the Foster Care System for visitations. If we can be a part of helping to break the pattern of abuse, then we have accomplished our mission. Please visit and see for yourself that you should never give up on a dream, we did not! Contact Sandy Kearney at [sandy@sandykearney.com](mailto:sandy@sandykearney.com) to schedule a tour.



**ANGELS** give **HOPE** for a better tomorrow...

The Angels would like to thank everyone who has made it possible for us to grow and keep the momentum of our non-profit. We continue to make a difference in the lives of our most precious asset, the children who represent our future. Every program we have developed has been successful and has a significant impact on the children we advocate for 24/7. Our famous Mad Hatter Tea Party was a special day for children needing a smile. Our highly anticipated Child Advocacy Expo brings our community partners together to collaborate and network with one another to become ONE powerful force in our community. These programs live on thanks to the generosity of people with the same passion as the Angels. This paves

the way for the Angels to focus on innovative programs that will have the greatest impact on the children and youth needing our assistance.

The Angels want to thank all our many supporters, organizations, foundations and businesses for their support and their belief in what we do for the children. It is because of their generous hearts that we can sustain our ability to give.

Special thanks to all our amazing volunteers. Volunteers are the voice of the people put into action. These actions shape and mold the present into a future for which we can all be proud. Some people give time, some money, some their skills and connections, some give their life's blood, but everyone has something to give!

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